



Manager's Report

April 2021

Hyde County was the top rated vaccinated county in North Carolina!!!

Hyde County Health Director, Ms. Luana Gibbs leads her team of Health Department staff in the fight against COVID! Hyde County's health care workers will be honored as employees of the Month April 2021.



Hyde Health Director leads her team during Spirit Week held in March! Environmental Health staff are not shown because they were “out in the field.” 🏡

We have no active cases of COVID-19 as of today. Cases have waned over the past several weeks, and vaccine administration has waned over the last couple of weeks. We need to continue to vaccinate. To date, Hyde County has 24.3% of its total population fully immunized from COVID-19; however, 38.1% of our population is partially immunized. In fact, as of March 24, **Hyde County was the top rated vaccinated county in North Carolina!!!** If you want information about the vaccine, such as vaccine types, side effects, schedules of administration, please contact us on our main phone line, 252-926-4399. If you want an appointment for your shot, please call 252-926-4474. We are providing the vaccine to ANYONE 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER.

Northeast Workforce Development Board unveils #worklocal initiative



Hyde County Commissioners Earl Pugh, Jr. (Lake Landing Township), Shannon Swindell (Currituck Township) and Goldie Topping (Swan Quarter Township) were pleased to join Lee Brimmage, Hyde County's Extension Agent in 4-H Youth Development, as he was spotlighted as a #worklocal role model for our youth in the month of March!



Beaufort Community College – Davis Center

New Technology Equipment, Summer Classes for Kids, and a Job Opportunity

Beaufort Community College is working towards installing new technology equipment in the BCCC Davis Center location. BCCC is eager to get the equipment up and running so that various classes can be shared with local residents. Summer kids programming is slated to include a 3-D Printing class, a one week Drone Camp and CSI, crime scene investigation techniques. More information to come on registration and dates. Finally, the BCCC is hiring at the Davis Center location! Please see the link below for full details. (*Job posting no longer available*)

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New Human Resources Director Named

Tracy Gibbs joins the Hyde County team as Human Resources Director

Hyde County is pleased to announce a new hire as Human Resources Manager.

Tracy is coming in at a busy time of year but is making great strides in learning her new position. We have been working together to craft an HR strategy with the goal of ensuring successful employee life cycles and work experiences, to promote a positive culture and to foster cohesion among staff and with the community. Tracy will be working with the County Manager over the next several months to craft strategies related to employee relations, appreciation and motivation as well as training and professional development.

Born and raised in Greensboro, NC, Tracy Gibbs moved to Hyde County, in August 2020, with her husband, a Hyde County native, two kids and three dogs. Tracy began working in a family owned HVAC/Insulation business at the early age of 16, where she assisted the Office Manager with all aspects of Office Administration. She graduated high school in 1998 and received an Interior Design degree in 2003. Soon after the 2008 global financial crisis, Tracy realized working in Administration was her passion. In 2010, she began working with Moses Cone Health System, which later changed their name to Cone Health, as a relief secretary. Within the course of a few years, Tracy worked her way up to the System Wide Patient Care Support Manager. She worked directly under the Chief Nurse Executive in supporting all seven acute care hospitals with inpatient nursing projects, department moves and construction. She was the Nursing Service Line Leader for the \$14M capital budget, managed all repurposed furniture, contract movers and offsite storage for the whole health system. In August 2020, Tracy and her family moved to Hyde County to slow down and enjoy life. Tracy is excited to be a part of the Hyde County family and looks forward to motivating and engaging your staff in achieving departmental goals.

Over the next several weeks, Tracy will reach out to each of our Department Heads to schedule individual Google Meet calls to get to know each of them and to begin to understand the roles and responsibilities of all Department Heads and their staff..

The Manager will work with Tracy on developing and implementing strategies to develop Hyde County into an organization that people are happy to work for and proud to be a part of. Tracy will be working with Finance to learn the payroll system and benefits management. We look forward to this endeavor together.

Derelict Vessel Update

Hyde County is pleased to work with the North Carolina Coastal Federation and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) to identify and address abandoned and derelict vessels along our shorelines.

Two smaller vessels, one in Silver Lake Harbor, Ocracoke and one near the Buck Paysor Bridge, Scranton have been identified and WRC has prioritized their removal. WRC is in the process of inspecting the vessels, placing a sticker and sending a certified letter to the last known owner indicating that it has been deemed abandoned and derelict. The last known owner has 30 days to respond thereafter before WRC would solicit a bid for removal.

Also, Wanchese Industrial Seafood Park Authority, who owns and manages the Engelhard Marine Industrial Park on Hill Street, Engelhard, is working towards removal of one of the large trawlers that is derelict on Far Creek.

Coastal Fed and WRC are awaiting notification of award from the FY21 NOAA Marine Debris Program to remove the other trawlers and anticipate notification in May. The earliest the removal of those vessels could happen would be September 2021 if the grant funds are awarded.

NC Fisheries Meeting Attended

Kris Cahoon Noble serves as the area representative and attended the March NC Fisheries Meeting. Items of discussion included the lawsuits pending against the Southern Shrimp Alliance and individual shrimp trawler boat owners. NCFA can not be a defendant in these cases. However, their assistance in the effort has generated tremendous legal fees so all members of the NCFA and others are encouraged to donate to NCFA to help with this battle.

Southern Flounder season was discussed and is expected to open between April 12-15 after the Virginia season ends and should last through the end of May.

An open seat on the South Atlantic Commission was discussed with an NCFA recommendation of Jess Hawkins to take that seat.

The Southern Flounder Amendment was discussed and the goal of rebuilding that stock. The new split for southern flounder will be 70% commercial and 30% recreational, representing a 3% loss to the commercial industry.

Ocracoke Selected for Resilient Communities Program

Ocracoke has been selected for the NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program

Hyde County is pleased to announce its selection into the NC Resilient Communities Program. This program is offered in partnership by the NC Division of Coastal Management and the NC Office of Recovery and Resiliency.

Making informed decisions to work toward more resilient communities requires careful, thorough planning efforts using sound, locally relevant data. Through this process a team assigned through the program will work to:

1. Address barriers to coastal resilience in NC at the local level, such as limited capacity, economic constraints, and social inequities;
2. Assist the Ocracoke community with risk and vulnerability assessments and developing a portfolio of planned and prioritized projects;
3. Advance coastal resilience projects to “shovel ready” status; and
4. Link the Ocracoke community to funding streams for project implementation.

Projects phases will include:

- Phase 1: Community Engagement and Risk/Vulnerability Assessment
- Phase 2: Planning, Project Identification, and Prioritization
- Phase 3: Engineering and Design
- Phase 4: Project Implementation

This award was made in March. Stay tuned for the Community Engagement Opportunities. They will be advertised through the Hyde Happenings, sent to the Observer and Current, and posted in the Variety Store.

Ferry Channels and Shoaling Concerns

In this section we will look at what is going on in the Silver Lake and Hatteras Channels

The month of March held many challenges in regard to shoaling in both major channels going to Ocracoke Island. Combined with severe weather conditions, shoaling resulted in cancelled and extended routes throughout the month. It has been challenging to residents, vendors, visitors and the Ferry Division alike. Below we will talk briefly about the current status of each channel and what's being done to address the challenges.

Silver Lake Harbor is currently accessed through the Federally Designated Channel Big Foot Slough. Last fall, significant shoaling in Silver Lake endangered ferry access and all federal funding for that channel had been expended earlier in the fiscal year. With no federal funding, Hyde County partnered with Carteret County to apply for Shallow Draft Navigation funds that resulted in a side cast dredge being deployed to Silver Lake. Enough work was completed to keep the channel marginally navigable until the last several weeks.

The good news is that Big Foot Slough received a much more generous federal appropriation this year, \$1M as opposed to the \$500,000 supplied last fiscal year which was not enough. Currently, (as of 3/28/2020) a hopper dredge is deployed in Big Foot Slough. Ferry cancelations have been constant since the work began as dredging activities have made the channel worse before it makes it better. Much of the material from the sides of

the channel have filled in the channel closing the route to ferry traffic. It has been beyond frustrating for residents, visitors, vendors and Ferry Division staff alike.

The Murden has enough funding, however, the Murden does have a hard stop of April 9th, because it has to transit to another project on that date, however, the Merritt will still be available if needed.

Today, 4/7/2021, ferry routes across the sound were halted because the two boats traversing these routes struck bottom. The Manager is working with Senator Tillis', Burr's and Greg Murphy's staff to plead for the dredge Murden to stay in place until the channel is navigable and sustainable for the near future. THE USACE office is aware of the situation and our working towards a solution. The Manager will continue with conversations with all partners to continue to reiterate the situation and ask for assistance from all partners on a daily basis.

Is there a better solution? We think there may be. The Ferry Division and Hyde County are currently exploring the possibility of utilizing another channel, 9 foot Slough as an alternate federally designated route. Archaeological surveys are currently being completed and cost estimates will be used to seek project funding to restore 9 foot Slough to a navigable channel and seek Federal Designation for the route.

Sloop's Channel is a part of the horseshoe shaped channel from Hatteras to Ocracoke used by the Ferry Division, the Coast Guard, commercial and recreational users. A portion of Sloop's Channel is so badly shoaled that ferries can not pass through that area at the same time. This tight fit is creating a wait time and extending the run time which in turn reduces the number of runs.

On March 25, the Manager organized an online meeting with Representative Bobby Hanig, staff from Senator Steinburg's office, Representative Greg Murphy's office, Senator Burr and Tillis' offices along with the Deputy Secretary for Multimodal Transportation Julie White, Ferry Division Direct Harold Thomas and other members of the DOT.

Federal staff indicated that the issue is the US Army Corp of Engineers is perpetually and generationally underfunded across the board up and down the entire east coast. The Manager reiterated that the underfunding at the federal level is being passed down to the state and now the local municipalities.

The total estimated cost, provided by the USACE and based on a February 2021 survey, to dredge the channel to 175' wide by 10' deep is \$1,282,750. Hyde County can use the Shallow Draft Fund to move forward which would mean Hyde would have to provide \$320,687.50 with the state contributing the remainder. This would have been the same course of action taken last year in Big Foot Slough when Carteret paid Hyde's local match of over \$60,000.

In reaction to this meeting Senator Steinburg has filed an amendment to House Bill 121 stating, ""SECTION 2. G.S. 143-215.73F is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 "(c1) Cost-share Exemption for DOT Ferry Channel Projects. – Notwithstanding the 6 cost-share requirements of subsection (c) of this section, no cost-share shall be required for 7 dredging projects for a ferry channel maintained by the North Carolina Department of

8 Transportation." 9 SECTION 3. This act is effective when it becomes law." This amendment has since moved out of the rules committee and is expected to be voted on the

week of April 12. Both Steinburg, Hanig and other legislative supporters have been working to change the process and eliminate the match. The Ferry Division is simultaneously applying for all permits to dredge.

2021 Passenger Ferry

NCDOT will be running the passenger ferry service from May 25 – September 9th this year. We will have the same departure schedule as last year (see table below).

Departs Hatteras	Departs Ocracoke
9:30 a.m.	11 a.m.
1 p.m.	3 p.m.
4:30 p.m.	8 p.m.

Engelhard Boardwalk – Renovation Planning

The Albemarle RC&D Council is partnering with Hyde County and the Engelhard Development Corporation to apply for NC DCM Public Access Funding to Revitalize and Repair the Engelhard Boardwalk

The Engelhard Development Corporation partnered with Hyde County over 20 years ago to build the Engelhard Boardwalk. This 1,450 ft. creekfront boardwalk is now in need of major repairs. The Albemarle Resource Conservation and Development Council, (ARC&D) through work with the Hyde County Soil & Water Conservation Office and Hyde Commissioner Shannon Swindell have identified this project and potential project grant funds through the CAMA Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program.

The project will entail a renovation to the Phase 1 Section shown in the above project map, which would replace decking and railing, and stringers and piles would be replaced or re-set as needed. Phase 2 will be addressed after completion of Phase 1. If approved in the Pre Application Process, Hyde County will submit a full application in May and hopefully be able to move forward with construction swiftly after that approval.

Ocracoke Fire District achieves higher protection class from OSFM

The Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) collects and evaluates information from communities in North Carolina on their structure fire suppression capabilities. The data is analyzed using their Fire Suppression Rating Schedule (FSRS) and then a Public Protection Classification (PPCTM) grade is assigned to the community. The surveys are conducted whenever it appears that there is a possibility of a PPC change. As such, the PPC program

provides important, up-to-date information about fire protection services throughout the country.

The OSFM thanked Chief O'neal, and others for the cooperation given to their representative during the recent survey and notified OVFD and Hyde County that Ocracoke Fire had completed our evaluation of the fire insurance classification for Ocracoke Fire District and advised that the protection class is a 5.

Formerly class 6 applied. Rates on dwellings (including those insured under Homeowners Policies) are established by the North Carolina Rate Bureau. We are advising them of the change. The rate change will be effective on Thursday, July 1, 2021.

In a March letter to Fire Chief, Albert O'neal, Mike Causey, Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal, congratulated Ocracoke Fire on their recent improvement to their fire suppression rating.

Mr Causey's comments:

"I commend you and your department for your dedication and commitment to making your community a safer place to live.

You deserve to brag a little about the expertise of your personnel, which saves homeowners money and, most importantly, makes their lives safer."

Mike Causey, NC Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal

Open Gov - Finance Software Conversion

The conversion process to migrate from our outdated software to the OpenGov platform is well underway. Several weekly meetings are being held each week as scheduled with team leaders and staff. We have completed a high level discussion on the go forward plan for financials and have begun the review of our chart of accounts to be completed by the team.

In addition we have begun weekly team meetings with OpenGov and the Building Inspections and Grant Administration Departments to begin to build out those interactive, online web portals. One of the first components of the OpenGov system to go live will enable citizens to apply, pay and receive building permits online and apply for housing assistance grants online.

Mattamuskeet Watershed Planning

A virtual meeting is set for 6:30-8:30 p.m. April 15 on the latest efforts associated with the Lake Mattamuskeet Watershed Restoration Plan.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission representatives will speak on ongoing monitoring efforts during the meeting. Geosyntec Consultants and Coastal Protection Engineering representatives and East Carolina University undergraduate engineering students will also be on hand to discuss conceptual engineering designs, the North Carolina Coastal Federation, hosts of the meeting, announced Monday. Visit nccoast.org to view the agenda and register for the meeting. To

attend the meeting at Hyde County Government Complex, register in advance with Daniel Brinn at dbrinn@hydecountync.gov or 252-926-7253.

Hyde County, the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service formed a partnership in 2017 and contracted the federation to help develop a watershed restoration plan for Lake Mattamuskeet, which had been experiencing declining water quality and elevated water levels.

The state Department of Environmental Quality on Aug. 7, 2019, approved the plan to address both poor water quality within the lake and chronic and persistent flooding on the surrounding landscape. The approval followed an 18-month planning process that included stakeholder and public engagement. Three grants were awarded in 2020 to implement the plan.

American Rescue Plan (COVID Relief)

The American Rescue Plan, will invest significantly in local governments, and President Biden's proposed infrastructure package, the [American Jobs Plan](#). The American Jobs Plan proposal includes a surface transportation reauthorization and other infrastructure legislation, including water, stormwater and broadband projects.

The U.S. Treasury Department is working to issue guidance for states and local governments on the interpretation and implementation of State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds allocated in the American Rescue Plan (ARP). According to estimates, counties in North Carolina will collectively receive \$2.034 billion in direct allocations from the Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. Municipalities will separately receive \$1.3 billion, either directly or through disbursement from the state, and the State of North Carolina will also separately receive \$5.3 billion. U.S. Treasury is scheduled to distribute one-half of the allocation by May 10, and the law requires the second-half of the allocation to be distributed one year after that. Hyde County is slated to receive a total of \$957,501 in addition to funding that will come down through the Health Department, Social Services and other departments for specified activities. Funds are available for use under the provisions of ARP until December 31, 2024. Local governments are considering how to wisely utilize this significant investment.

OIRRT - Rebuilding Homes on Ocracoke

The Ocracoke Interfaith Relief and Recovery team, formed in response to Hurricane Dorian, has partnered with Hyde County to rebuild homes and lives in Ocracoke.

Houses are continually being readied for homeowners to move back into their homes as OIRRT strives to make families and lives whole again. A full OIRRT report is provided in the Information Items of the April 7, 2021 Board of Commissioners packet. The OIRRT partners with the County Grant Administrator to keep construction funding flowing and work progressing.

In addition, Hyde County partners with OIRRT to administer the travel trailer program, housing people left with no other option after Hurricane Dorian. Of the 35 travel trailers originally deployed only 8 are still being utilized for housing. Sixteen of the travel trailers that we moved out of were given to Bertie County for temporary housing after their devastating tornado event. Any surplus travel trailers that are being taken out of service will be sold on GovDeals.com which provides services to government agencies allowing them to sell surplus assets via the Internet. Prior to the posting of the travel trailers on the website, a notice will be issued in the Hyde Happenings.

Purple and Golden Bus Tour

The Purple and Golden Bus Tour, led by the Division of Research, Economic Development and Engagement, is designed to introduce faculty members with identified research plans to the culture, geography, heritage, economy and assets of the region around our campus. The program encourages partnerships and research that may have long-term benefits for the people and communities of eastern North Carolina.

The Manager participates in the bus tour each year. COVID restrictions forced the Bus Tour to be virtual this year. The Manager participated in the Water Resources panel discussion.



The panel discussion was held April 7, 2021 at 8:30 am. A video from the panel discussion will be played during the Manager's Report.